



Commonwealth of Kentucky  
Office of the Governor

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**Gov. Beshear Announces Equine Breeding Farms Now Eligible for  
Federal Disaster Relief Program**

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (Feb. 13, 2013)** – Governor Steve Beshear announced today that Kentucky horse breeding farms are now eligible to apply for certain federal relief from disasters affecting agriculture.

Equine farms which produce breeding stock for commercial use as a part of their farming operation and claim the horse breeding stock for tax purposes with the IRS may be eligible for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency's Emergency Conservation Program (ECP).

The change follows repeated requests from Gov. Beshear to the USDA to reconsider their disaster relief policies for these horse farms. Since Gov. Beshear took office in 2008, the state has experienced 11 federally-declared disasters, including flooding, ice storms and tornadoes. All but two of the state's 120 counties have been included in at least one disaster, and Kentucky has the 7<sup>th</sup>-highest frequency of federal natural disasters in the country. This summer's extreme drought was classified as an agricultural disaster.

"The horse breeding industry is a vital segment of Kentucky's agricultural economy, and it's important that these farms have access to this program when natural disasters strike," said Gov. Beshear. "Our continued communications with USDA helped them to understand the unique composition and needs of farms in our state. The USDA has been receptive and compassionate in their consideration of our farm families, and I thank them and the administration for their thoughtful and substantive response to our concerns."

The program provides emergency funding and technical assistance to farmers and ranchers to rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for implementing emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought. Funding for ECP is appropriated by Congress, and the program is administered by state and county Farm Service Agency (FSA) committees.

In communications with USDA, Gov. Beshear had asked that Kentucky horse breeding operations be considered eligible for the program, to help them recover quickly after natural disasters. FSA recently updated its handbook, reflecting the eligibility.

“We appreciate USDA rethinking the eligibility of horse breeding farms for the Emergency Conservation Program and clarifying that they are indeed eligible,” said American Horse Council President Jay Hickey. “This will benefit those horse farms and ranches hard hit by disasters. Governor Beshear, the Kentucky Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders and the American Horse Council deserve a lot of credit for working with the Department of Agriculture to finally get this resolved favorably for breeders,” said AHC president Jay Hickey.

“We are very appreciative of Governor Beshear for his leadership and involvement in this effort,” said David Switzer, executive director, Kentucky Thoroughbred Owners and Breeders.

According to KTOB, approximately 600 commercial breeding operations in Kentucky, representing all breeds, are now eligible to apply for ECP funds.

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